

# August 2015 is National Breastfeeding Month



It's not a coincidence that August is celebrated as National Breastfeeding Month in the Commonwealth of Virginia as proclaimed by the Governor. Since 1991, August 1-7 has been designated as World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) which is coordinated by the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) and is celebrated around the globe. The theme for 2015 is **BREASTFEEDING AND WORK LET'S MAKE IT WORK!**



Babies are born to breastfeed and breastfeeding has numerous benefits for families. Breastfeeding is the nutritional standard for infant feeding. A mother's breast milk is not only the ideal food for infants, but it is the only food that infants need for the first six months of life. Breast milk is the infant's first immunization. It provides antibodies and immunities, which protect the infant from many chronic and acute illnesses such as diarrhea, ear and lower respiratory infections. In today's economy,

breastfeeding makes financial sense. Families can save an estimated \$1,200-\$1,500 per year on infant formula alone. If you add in the benefits of having a healthy baby, the savings really add up.

Breastfeeding is also good for mothers. Breastfeeding burns extra calories, and makes it easier to lose the excess pounds gained during pregnancy. For mothers, breastfeeding reduces type 2 diabetes, heart disease, breast, and ovarian cancer and other diseases. It is for this reason that breastfeeding is an important part of public health prevention for all parts of the community.

Since working mothers are the fastest growing segment of the workforce, providing a mother-friendly worksite is a priority for many employers. Businesses that support mothers who choose to breastfeed their infants experience increased employee retention, lower absenteeism, reduced health care costs and improved productivity. Mother-friendly businesses support working mothers by providing privacy and flexibility to express and store milk. This support encourages working mothers to pursue their breastfeeding goals while continuing to achieve the responsibilities of their jobs. Balancing work and breastfeeding contributes to a healthy, vibrant workforce and a better society.



The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) strives to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding throughout the Commonwealth by providing women with education and the opportunity to make informed

For more information about how to increase the awareness or to generate interest about becoming a Virginia Mother Friendly worksite visit <http://worldbreastfeedingweek.org>

## Other Resources

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/ofhs/dcn/wicBreastfeeding/>

<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title18.2/chapter8/section18.2-387/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/promotion/employment.htm>

<http://illinoisbreastfeeding.org/media/e69ca871966fd44affff8617ffffe415.pdf>